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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: MEDIA REACTION: SITUATION IN
AFGHANISTAN

¶1. SUMMARY: Nepal's popular vernacular weekly Ghatana Ra Bichar (estimated circulation of 7,000) on Wednesday, December 7, 2009 published an opinion piece by a recent International Visitor Leadership participant. Babita Basnet, editor of the magazine and a participant of the IVLP "U.S. Foreign Policy," from November 9 - 20, 2009 writes about her meetings with 'think tanks' and their concerns about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. Basnet praises President Obama for deciding to deploy more troops, but at the same time reasons that the Pentagon will have to use a lot of strategies to keep the troops' morale high.

SELECTED EXCERPTS:

¶2. "... After three and half months of consultations and study President Barack Obama announced his plan to deploy 30,000 more troops in Afghanistan. There have been long discussions in the United States about whether to add troops in Afghanistan ...Americans are concerned about the situation in Afghanistan but also believe that the operations in Afghanistan will not yield positive results unless strong actions are taken against the Taliban in Pakistan. 'Pakistan must be sincere in controlling terrorism,' they say."

¶3. "... The American media has also raised questions about President Obama nominating retired army generals to the positions of security experts. Those raising these questions say: 'why spend the state treasury on those who've been paid from it all their life?' But talking to a team of South Asian journalists, Dr. John Alan William of the National Strategy Forum, Chicago, said that there are many people who have spent their life on security strategy. ...Therefore, President Obama has done the right thing."

BERRY